

STARS AND STRIPES

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A news digest for U.S. forces serving overseas



JOSEPH GIORDONO/Stars and Stripes

Lt. Col. John Charlton, commander of 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, surveys his troops before addressing them early Monday at Assembly Area Hammer, Kuwait.

With war looming, Charlton urges soldiers onward

BY JOSEPH GIORDONO

Stars and Stripes

ASSEMBLY AREA
HAMMER, Kuwait

Nine months of waiting in the desert will soon be over, and the shortest road home is directly through Baghdad, the commander of 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment told his troops at a sunrise formation Monday.

Amid a growing sense that G-Day — the time when a ground offensive begins — is right around the corner, Lt. Col. John Charlton reminded his troops of their mission and urged them to stay sharp.

"If they want a fight, you finish it. And you finish it fast," Charlton said, to a chorus of "hooah" replies. "You take the fight to the enemy

and you crush them. Don't go in half-steppin'."

The 1st Battalion has been in Kuwait since May 2002, with a four-week break around Christmas. They returned in early January and, for the past two weeks, have lived in a temporary desert camp just south of the Iraqi border.

On Monday, Charlton told his troops he had hoped to give them the order to move forward to attack position, the final temporary camp before crossing the Iraqi border.

But he does not expect the delay to be long.

"I heard that some of you don't like this place we've got here. So I've been doing some real estate shopping and I think there's some better places up north we might

want to go check out," he said.

"And after we check out those places up north, we're going to take a nice, long trip to a place called home. It's coming very quickly."

The soldiers have endured sandstorms, almost a year away from their families and the uncertainty of when an invasion would kick off. Many were a little disappointed that Monday's formation wasn't the word to move forward.

"We've had formations at least once a month, and it's almost the same thing that's been said each time," said Spc. Clay Cadwalader, a 22-year-old from Lehman, Pa.

"But this time everyone is more than ready. We've been out here so long, we're ready to go home. If the shortest way is north, let us go north."

Others agreed.

"Either way, something's fixing to happen," said Spc. Philip Morris, a 23-year-old from Dothan, Ala. "I'm not really nervous, because I have confidence in the people next to me. I don't have any experience in this sort of thing, so I really don't know what to expect."

Charlton started the formation by shouting "Gas, gas, gas," sending his troops into an instinctive reaction to don their protective masks. The point was clear: The road ahead is dangerous.

"My goal is to bring every one of you home alive," Charlton said. "You know you're going to be up front in the fight and that's where you belong. You will all go home heroes."

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Greenpeace arrests near Rota

Stars and Stripes

NAVAL STATION ROTA, Spain — A group of anti-war Greenpeace activists will face a Spanish judge after trying to block U.S. military ships from leaving the Navy base port in Rota.

Spanish authorities arrested two of the protesters, including an American, as they tried to chain themselves to a buoy Friday morning near the pier's entrance. Later that day, Spain's Civil Guard arrested three other activists aboard the group's flagship Rainbow Warrior as it remained anchored about 250 yards from the entryway.

Before handcuffing the ship's captain, law enforcement officials stormed the 159-foot schooner, took its anchor and towed it back to the port city of Cadiz, where it remained Monday.

The activists, who were released Saturday, are charged with disobedience and resisting arrest. A court date has not been scheduled.

One of the Greenpeace activists taken into custody, Carlos Bravo of Spain, criticized Spanish police, claiming they shattered windows on the ship and injured some of the crew members during the arrests.

He vowed the group would sail again and resume its anti-war tour of ports supporting the U.S. military buildup in the Middle East.

"We will continue to protest against what we believe is an illegal war," Bravo said.

Greenpeace is known for backing environmental-protection initiatives, but is also an outspoken opponent of any war against Iraq. About 250,000 U.S. and British troops are in the Persian Gulf region, poised for a confrontation.

Greenpeace says their hoping the anchor will be returned soon so activists can take their ship and anti-war message to Mediterranean ports supporting U.S. military cargo ships.

Business

American Airlines' problems: The chief executive of cash-strapped American Airlines Inc. wants to keep the world's largest carrier from sinking more deeply into financial distress.

Representatives of the carrier were expected to begin formal meetings Monday with two unions representing flight attendants, ground workers and mechanics.

Spiegel bankruptcy: Spiegel Inc., parent of Eddie Bauer, Newport News and the Spiegel Catalog, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection Monday following a long-term decline in its credit-card business.

The Downers Grove, Ill.-based retailer said it had arranged for \$400 million in bankruptcy financing and expected to keep all its stores and catalog operations operating throughout the bankruptcy process.

Kmart Corp. fraud: Lawyers for two former Kmart Corp. vice presidents facing federal securities fraud charges have waived an initial court appearance for the men, the U.S. attorney's office said Monday.

Enio A. "Tony" Montini Jr., 50, and Joseph Hofmeister, 52, are accused of inflating the company's earnings for part of the year before the discount retailer's bankruptcy. A lawyer for the men has called the charges "wrong and unjust."

Swissair investigation: A Swiss prosecutor said Monday that he has frozen the bank accounts of former top managers of collapsed national airline Swissair as part of a criminal investigation into the company.

The funds may eventually be used to cover expenses tied to criminal charges in connection with Swissair's 2001 collapse.

States

Transplant error: The head of a group that helped locate organs for the Mexican teenager who died after a bungled transplant says his organization didn't know her blood type before it released the heart and lungs.

Jesica Santillan, 17, died Feb. 22, two weeks after her first heart-lung transplant at Duke University Medical Center.

A second set of organs was required because Jesica had type-O blood and the organs used in the first operation were type A.

Correctly matched organs were implanted Feb. 20, but she died two days later.

"We could have requested her blood type, and I wish we had," Lloyd Jordan, president of Carolina Donor Services, said in a "60 Minutes" interview broadcast Sunday. "We did not do that."

Lieberman endorsement: Sen. Joe Lieberman's presidential campaign has won the backing of fellow Connecticut Sen. Chris Dodd, who announced two weeks ago that he would not make his own run for the White House.

Dodd announced March 3 he would stay out of the presidential race to remain in the Senate and battle President Bush's agenda.

Abortion doctor's slaying: An unusual defense strategy that divided James Kopp's lawyers will be put to the test when the anti-abortion radical goes on trial for the murder of an abortion provider.

Kopp, who admits to shooting the doctor but denies committing a crime, was scheduled to be tried Monday in Erie County Court.

In a surprise move that even the judge advised against, Kopp last week waived his right to a jury trial and asked a judge to decide his fate based on a 30-page list of facts and a single day of arguments.

Lead attorney Bruce Barket said Kopp believes the forum will better

News tracker: What's new with old news

serve his anti-abortion message by keeping it from getting "lost in a chorus" of other testimony.

Protester becomes martyr: Within hours of being crushed by an Israeli bulldozer, Rachel Corrie became a martyr and hero for the peace activists of her home town.

Candles burned and bitter tears flowed as several hundred people gathered Sunday evening in a waterfront park in this small liberal city.

Mourners held photocopied pictures of Corrie, 23, a student at Evergreen State College in Olympia who died Sunday in Gaza while trying to stop the bulldozer from tearing down a Palestinian physician's home. She fell in front of the machine, which ran over her and then backed up, witnesses said.

The Israeli military said her death was an accident.

The caption under the picture displayed by the mourners was "Peace-maker," while a hand-lettered banner read: "Rachel, your courage, your spirit of resistance and your joy for life will inspire us always to stand for peace and justice." Mourners put flowers on a mock coffin draped with a Palestinian head-cloth.

Her friends called on the United States to stop aiding Israel and avoid war in Iraq.

"Rachel shouldered the responsibility that her government would not bear," said Krissy Johnson, 24.

World

Palestinian reforms: Yasser Arafat suffered defeat in the Palestinian parliament Monday, with legislators rejecting his demand that a Cabinet formed by a future prime minister be "presented" to the Palestinian leader.

In a show of hands, legislators voted 49 to 22 against the amendment to the prime minister's bill, one of several changes proposed by Arafat. The vote raised the possibility of delay in installing a credible prime minister. Arafat and parliament will now have to try to reach a compromise — a possibly time-consuming process.

Austrian opposition: Jörg Haider, the former leader of the far-right Freedom Party, threatened Monday to form his own parliamentary faction unless two retired government members stop receiving monthly paychecks and other privileges are abolished.

Haider, the populist and increasingly sidelined governor of the southern Carinthia province, said his provincial party chapter might split away, thus further weakening an already shrunken Freedom Party.

Sri Lankan unrest: Hours before peace talks were to resume, the Sri Lankan navy on Monday apprehended a Tamil Tiger rebel vessel suspected of transporting weapons, a senior navy officer said.

A navy patrol boat detected the rebel vessel near the government-controlled area of the eastern port of Trincomalee, chased it down and arrested three guerrillas on board, the officer said on condition of anonymity.

It was the most serious incident between the two sides since they signed a cease-fire in February last year.

Food for N. Korea: A U.N. envoy bound for North Korea said Sunday that the United States is promising to send 40,000 tons of food immediately for the hungry nation.

Maurice Strong, a Canadian aide to Secretary-General Kofi Annan, announced the donation and was en route to Pyongyang as part of U.N. efforts to mediate in a standoff over the North's nuclear program.

Human rights office: A government-appointed human rights commission is branching out into the Afghan countryside and will soon establish offices in seven cities outside the capital, a U.N. spokesman said Sunday.

The Independent Human Rights Com-

mission, headed by former women's affairs minister Sima Samar, will open its first satellite office in the western city of Herat on Wednesday, said Manoel de Almeida e Silva, the U.N. spokesman in Kabul.

War on terrorism

Terrorist suspects' trial: Eighteen months after a raid on an apartment uncovered what prosecutors say was a conspiracy to support terrorist strikes in Jordan, Turkey and the United States, four men charged in the case are coming to trial.

The government claims the terror cell looked for security gaps at Detroit Metropolitan Airport, got fake identification to help others enter the country and recruited for a radical Islamic movement allied with al-Qaida.

The trial, set to begin Tuesday, will be one of the first for an alleged terror cell in this country since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. It may test the government's ability to prove accusations about terror plots in the making.

Karim Koubriti, Ahmed Hannan, Farouk Ali-Haimoud and Abdel-Ilah El-mardoudi are charged with conspiracy to provide material support or resources to terrorists.

Ground Zero air quality: Ground Zero tests by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in the days immediately after the World Trade Center collapse did not support the agency's own statements the air around the site was safe to breathe, a newspaper reported.

A report by the EPA's Office of Inspector General, obtained by The Sacramento Bee, supports the views of some doctors and public health advocates who evaluated thousands of firefighters, volunteers, demolition workers and laborers working on the site.

"To say that it's safe, which suggests no risk, we just knew that was wrong," said Jonathan Bennett, a spokesman for the New York Committee for Occupational Safety and Health.

Dubai nightclubs targeted: The U.S. Embassy in the United Arab Emirates said Sunday that nightclubs in the emirate of Dubai were possible targets for terrorists and urged its citizens to avoid going to them.

Dubai is famous for its bustling night life and liberal social lifestyle in the conservative Persian Gulf, attracting a cosmopolitan crowd from neighboring Gulf states, Europe and North America.

Military

Black Hawk crash survivors: The conditions of two soldiers who survived a Black Hawk helicopter crash last week during training at Fort Drum, that killed 11, were upgraded Sunday.

Spc. Dmitri Petrov, 24, from Brooklyn, and Spc. Edwin Mejia, 20, from Houston, were in stable condition Sunday evening at Samaritan Medical Center in Watertown.

Mejia was upgraded from serious to good condition, while Petrov was upgraded from critical to serious condition, according to a Fort Drum statement.

Yokota projectiles: Leftist radicals protesting a possible U.S.-led war in Iraq claimed responsibility for firing projectiles at a U.S. military base near Tokyo last week, local media reported Sunday.

The projectiles Wednesday made a banging sound but caused no damage or injuries. No one was arrested, but police found two pipelike projectile launchers near the perimeter of Yokota Air Base in Tokyo's western suburbs.

Public television broadcaster NHK said it had received a letter from a group calling itself the "Revolutionary Army" claiming credit for the attack. The group said it acted to protest war in Iraq.

From wire services

Bush gives ultimatum to Saddam

BY SCOTT LINDLAW

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — Abandoning diplomacy, President Bush gave Saddam Hussein a final ultimatum Monday to leave Iraq or face a U.S.-led war. The president planned an address to the nation at 8 p.m. EST to explain his decision.

"This matter cannot continue indefinitely," Secretary of State Colin Powell said.

The development came as the United States, Britain and Spain ended diplomatic efforts in the United Nations to disarm Saddam, withdrawing their proposed resolution setting an ultimatum and clearing the way for a U.S.-led war without Security Council approval.

"It was our judgment that no further purpose would be served by pushing this resolution," Powell said.

The latest draft of Bush's address gives Saddam a firm deadline to go into exile or face military action, said two senior White House officials who spoke on condition of anonymity. They would not say precisely how long the deadline would be, but said it was a matter of days.

The officials cautioned, however, that Bush could decide before his address to drop the deadline, and that some of his advisers were opposed to it.

Whether Bush sets a dead-

line or not, several White House officials said war is days away unless Saddam complies.

In an indication that U.S. forces are primed for battle, Gen. Tommy Franks, the commander of the quarter-million U.S. troops in the Gulf region, met in Kuwait on Monday with his land forces commander, Army Lt. Gen. David D. McKiernan. Franks then returned to his Central Command post at Camp As Sayliyah, Qatar. On Saturday he met with his Navy and Marine Corps commanders in Bahrain.

Ahead of the Bush speech, top congressional leaders were to go to the White House to meet with the president. First thing Monday, several top administration officials, including Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, Attorney General John Ashcroft, Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge and FBI Director Robert Mueller, filed into the White House.

Bush's speech was to include a warning for humanitarian workers and journalists to leave the country, officials said. Bush planned to warn them that Saddam has a history of taking hostages, they said.

Powell, in a news conference at the State Department, said that Bush would say that leaving Iraq was the only way for Saddam to avoid war. He

said that those who must leave Iraq include Saddam and "immediate members of his family."

The U.S. ultimatum came a day after Bush and the leaders of Britain, Spain and Portugal held a brief summit in the Azores and agreed to give U.N. diplomacy one last day. Bush left the impression Sunday that he would work through Monday on finding a last-ditch diplomatic decision.

Powell said the move to abandon diplomacy early on Monday came after "we spent a great deal of time overnight and early this morning talking to friends and colleagues."

Bush spoke early Monday with his principal allies — British Prime Minister Tony Blair, Spanish King Juan Carlos and Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar. Powell spoke to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan and with a half-dozen foreign ministers.

Bush had no plans to talk to French President Jacques Chirac.

"France has made its point clear through (its threatened) veto, which acquiesces to Iraq continuing to have weapons of mass destruction," Fleischer said.

Powell too had sharp criticism for France, saying five years ago it tried to weaken the U.N. inspection system. Close aides said he would not attend a foreign ministers'

meeting called by France with the support of Russia and Germany.

At the U.N., John Negroponte, U.S. ambassador to the world body, told reporters, "It has been nearly 4½ months since the council unanimously adopted 1441 which found Iraq in material breach and gave it a final opportunity to disarm. The government of Iraq has clearly failed to comply."

White House spokesman Ari Fleischer told reporters: "The diplomatic window has closed as a result of the U.N.'s failure to enforce its own resolutions for Saddam to disarm."

Later in Baghdad, Iraqi Foreign Minister Naji Sabri was asked about Bush's ultimatum for Saddam to leave Iraq.

"The only option is the departure of the warmonger No. 1 in the world — the failing President Bush who has made his country a joke in the world," he said.

Fleischer said U.S. officials were reviewing whether to raise the national terror alert. Another administration official said the alert status was unlikely to change Monday, and said the start of a war would not automatically elevate it from its current yellow, or middle, status. New intelligence information will be discussed each morning by the departments of Justice and Homeland Security, which jointly assess the threat level.

Turkey will reconsider U.S. troops' presence

The Associated Press

ISTANBUL, Turkey — Turkey's top political and military leaders called on the government Monday to take urgent steps toward allowing U.S. troops to deploy in the country.

The announcement came at the end of a meeting that included the leaders of Turkey's new government, President Ahmet Necdet Sezer, and top generals.

The United States has repeatedly

called on Turkey's government to quickly resubmit to parliament a resolution that would let thousands of U.S. soldiers deploy at Turkish bases.

Washington had sought the deployment so U.S. troops could open a northern front against Saddam Hussein's forces in an Iraq war.

A statement released after the meeting referred to an earlier meeting of Turkey's top political and military leaders that called on parliament to take steps to

let in foreign troops.

"A unanimous decision was reached ... that there is a need to move urgently according to the National Security advisory taken on Jan. 21, 2003," presidential spokesman Tacan Ildem said.

The Turkish government has delayed resubmitting a new resolution to parliament and Turkey's new prime minister, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, earlier indicated that any new vote on the deployment would be at least another week away.

British minister resigns over Iraq

The Associated Press

LONDON — A senior British Cabinet minister resigned Monday after disagreeing with the government's decision to back military action against Iraq.

Robin Cook, a former foreign secretary, resigned his post as the government's leader in the House of Commons after a private meeting with Prime Minister Tony Blair.

The two met before an emergency meeting of the full Cabinet that was called by Blair, according to the prime minister's office.

Blair faces a major revolt within his governing Labor Party over his decision to back President Bush in using force to disarm Saddam Hussein.

Earlier Monday, Britain and the United States abandoned their efforts to get U.N. approval for military action.

Many in the Labor Party oppose military action without explicit U.N. approval.

Cook is expected to lead opposition in government during a debate in the next day or two over Blair's handling of the crisis.

Although Blair faces considerable discontent among his lawmakers, he is expected to survive any vote.

Cook was foreign secretary in Blair's first government in 1997, but was replaced by Jack Straw in 2001.

International aid minister Clare Short, who has criticized Blair's policy as "reckless," also has threatened to leave the Cabinet.

Earlier, a move to war was backed by the attorney general, Lord Goldsmith, who said that the authority to use force against Iraq stemmed from the combined effect of three U.N. Security Council resolutions.

"All of these resolutions were adopted under Chapter VII of the U.N. Charter which allows the use of force for the express purpose of restoring international peace and security," said Goldsmith in legal advice published Monday.

"We're now in a very serious situation and decisions on military action will have to be taken shortly," Foreign Office Minister Mike O'Brien told British Broadcasting Corp. radio. "If it's clear that Saddam is not going to disarm, [and] I think we're increasingly coming to that conclusion, it may well then be necessary to remove Saddam Hussein."

In an analysis of the legality of war published Monday, Goldsmith said that U.N. resolution 1441, which gave Saddam a final opportunity to disarm or face "serious consequences" and was passed unanimously by the Security Council in November, is backed up by two earlier resolutions.

U.N. workers to leave Iraq

UNITED NATIONS — Secretary-General Kofi Annan ordered U.N. employees on Monday to leave Iraq, after the United States, Britain and Spain abandoned efforts to win U.N. backing for military action. President Bush gave Saddam Hussein an ultimatum to get out of his country or face a U.S.-led war.

The dramatic announcements, on the same day as the Security Council members met to address the Iraq crisis, coincided with countries closing their embassies there and some foreign journalists pulling out.

"We will withdraw the UNMOVIC and atomic agency inspectors. We will withdraw the U.N. humanitarian workers," Annan said.

Journalists outside the Canal Hotel, the Baghdad headquarters of the inspectors, saw Iraqi U.N. employees leaving with boxes of personal belongings.

The suspension of the U.N. humanitarian program will cut off food and medicine to about 60 percent of Iraq's 20 million people.

There are 156 U.N. inspectors and support staff in Iraq from the International Atomic Energy Agency, which is in charge of nuclear inspections, and the U.N. Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission, known as UNMOVIC, which is responsible for inspecting chemical, biological and long-range missiles.

Kuwait deemed unsafe

KUWAIT CITY — The United States and Britain urged their citizens to leave Kuwait immediately as war loomed Monday, citing the risk of chemical or biological attack by Iraq or terrorists.

The warning came as U.N. observers stopped all patrols at the heavily fortified Iraq-Kuwait border ahead of a possible U.N. evacuation. Iraq accused the United Nations of abandoning its "responsibility in maintaining world peace and security."

The United States and Britain have nearly 300,000 troops in the Persian Gulf, mostly in Kuwait, poised for a possible invasion of Iraq.

The State Department ordered all U.S. government dependents and nonessential staff out of Kuwait, Syria, Israel and the West Bank and Gaza, citing the "deteriorating security situation in the region."

Britain likewise pared its embassy to a skeleton staff Monday.

Both countries warned their nationals against travel to Kuwait and urged those already there to get out while commercial flights are still running.

From wire services

France scorns U.S. decision to drop diplomacy

The Associated Press

PARIS — Refusing to abandon its anti-war stance on Iraq, France on Monday lashed out at the United States, Britain and Spain for following a path toward military conflict.

Foreign Minister Dominique de Villepin said late Monday the three nations had decided to abandon diplomacy because a large majority of U.N. Security Council oppose their call for war against Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

"Despite the will clearly expressed by the international community, the United States, Britain and Spain underlined today their determination to resort to force," de Villepin said in a statement. France "regrets a decision that is not justified today and that risks serious consequences for the region and the world."

In Moscow, meanwhile, the Kremlin press service said Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chirac spoke by tele-

phone and "underlined the necessity of continuing, despite the serious worsening of circumstances, the political-diplomatic efforts in the framework of the United Nations." Russia and Germany have strongly aligned themselves with the French stance for peaceful disarmament of Iraq.

Earlier Monday, de Villepin also told reporters that despite the disagreement over Iraq, France remains an "ally" and "a friend" of the United States and that it would offer assistance after a war.

"We will respond to the demands of our allies," he said. De Villepin added that France would continue to allow U.S. aircraft to fly through French airspace, which was granted following the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

France had also said it was willing to accept a 30-day deadline for Iraq to disarm, provided the move was endorsed by the chief U.N. weapons inspectors. But U.S. officials have dismissed the idea as a nonstarter.

Saddam issues denial

The Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq — President Saddam Hussein said Monday that Iraq once had weapons of mass destruction for defense against Iran and Israel but no longer holds them, the Iraqi News Agency said.

The agency said Saddam made the remarks while meeting with a Tunisian envoy.

"We are not weapons collectors," Saddam said. "But we had these weapons for purposes of self-defense when we were at war with Iran for eight years and when the Zionist entity (Israel) was, and it still is, a threat."

Iraq and Iran fought a ruinous 1980-1988 war in which chemical weapons were used.

He also said his country had fully cooperated with U.N. inspectors seeking to verify that Iraq had eliminated its weapons of mass destruction. President Bush has warned Saddam bluntly to disarm or face the consequences.

"We have a real desire to rid our region and the whole world of weapons of mass destruction," Saddam said.

He then called on the United States to set an example by destroying its own weapons of mass destruction first.

Meanwhile, Germany and the Czech Republic closed their embassies in Baghdad on Monday, other nations prepared to evacuate and, in the clearest sign yet that war is imminent, the United States advised U.N. inspectors to leave.

The chief U.N. weapons inspectors, Hans Blix and Mohamed ElBaradei, said the United States advised them to begin pulling their inspectors from Iraq.

Puerto Rican guards to assist AF security

BY RON JENSEN

Stars and Stripes

RAF LAKENHEATH, England — More than 300 soldiers from the Puerto Rico Army National Guard are arriving in Europe to assist beleaguered Air Force security forces at air bases in England, Italy and Turkey.

The soldiers will be working at RAF Lakenheath, RAF Molesworth and RAF Mildenhall in England; Aviano Air Base, Italy; and Incirlik Air Base, Turkey. German soldiers already are helping provide security at air bases in Germany.

The guardsmen will be deployed for six months and replaced by troops from other Guard units.

"I'm absolutely ecstatic that we have National Guard troops here," said Lt. Col. Bill Delaney, commander of the 48th Security Forces Squadron at Lakenheath.

He said the help of about 100 soldiers will give his troops time for needed training, and, more importantly, let them take some time off.

"The time for training is always made," he said. "It's the days off that are the casualty here."

Since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks in America, force protection measures have been stepped up at military bases worldwide. About 9,000 guardsmen in the United States are providing security help at 163 stateside bases.

Delaney said his troops have been working 65 hours per week since the attacks.

"They're tired," he said. "It has gone on for a long, long time."

Senior Airman Roberto Perez is happy to see the Guard, and not just because he can speak Spanish with them.

He described the work schedule for his squadron as "rough at times."

"It's been nonstop," he said. "It's been get up, arm up, go to bed, get up, arm up, go to bed."

The 12-hour shifts, he said, are really more like 14- or 15-hour shifts because of the need to check out weapons and get briefed before the shift, and then turn in weapons after the shift.

"We welcome the Army with open arms," he said.

Capt. Adlyn Pedraza, commander of Company A, 192nd Support Battalion, which arrived at Lakenheath on Monday, said the soldiers spent one month at Fort Dix, N.J., for training in such areas as searching a car or a person, plus some weapons training.

"I feel pretty good doing this," she said. "The morale is high."

Pedraza is a teacher when not in uniform. She said she will keep in touch with her students via e-mail and tell them what she is doing.

"I just tell them, 'I'm protecting you guys,'" she said.

Pfc. Laura Feliciano, 19, a biology student back home, is on her first deployment.

"I'm looking forward to everything," she said. "It's not every day you find an opportunity to travel."

She said there is no difference between protecting an Army base or an Air Force base.

Spc. Joel Dejesus, 20, is also on his first deployment, missing his job in the packing and handling department of a Procter & Gamble Co. warehouse back home.

"We're going to be far from our families," he said. "We'll be missing them. But we'll get used to it."

He said the morale is high and members of the company keep one another's spirits up.

"If you see someone who is looking homesick, you say, 'Hey, come on. It's going to be better tomorrow,'" he said.

Delaney said the 48th Fighter Wing historian told him that soldiers have not been stationed at RAF Lakenheath since 1967. Also, guardsmen have never made a home at the base.

"This is the first such deployment," he said.

But, he said, it is the way of the world in the aftermath of Sept. 11 and the ongoing war on terrorism, as well as the military buildup for possible war with Iraq.

"Sept. 11 brought with it a lot of unique challenges," Delaney said. "One is an increase in the overall security of American facilities."

His security forces have been joined on the job for the past 18 months with augmentees from other units. He said that program will remain.

"We'll use augmentees when we need to," he said.

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AF: No stop-movement policy has been initiated

Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — Air Force officials on Monday clarified an announcement on the new stop-loss policy: No stop-movement policy restricting Permanent Change of Station has been enacted.

Over the weekend, several Stars and Stripes readers sent e-mails to the newspaper, wanting more information after seeking answers

from their commands and were told the Air Force had instituted no stop-movement policy.

The Air Force announced Friday that the service was enacting stop loss for 99 Air Force Specialty Codes, a move that will prevent airmen from separating or retiring after May 2.

The move is projected to affect roughly 21,000 airmen by

the end of the calendar year in the 43 specialties for officers and 56 for enlisted.

Air Force leaders enacted the policy across active-duty, ready Reserve and Air National Guard, and the movement affects Air Force personnel in the ranks of airmen through colonel.

Personnel officials have set up a waiver process for people with unique circumstances.

Kitty Hawk cleans up after dust covers aircraft carrier

BY KENDRA HELMER

Stars and Stripes

ABOARD THE USS KITTY HAWK — The USS Kitty Hawk's whistle started blowing Thursday as a dust storm quickly reduced visibility.

The storm coated aircraft on the flight deck of the aircraft carrier with a powdery brown dust, some of it creeping into the hangar bay.

It was the second storm to hit the Kitty Hawk since it arrived in the Persian Gulf at the end of February.

Every week to 10 days, the particles blow in from Iraq, creating a smoglike line along the horizon.

"It could impact us if it hit during a flying period," said Cmdr. Ed Wolfe, head of the air department.

Wolfe is responsible for recommending whether planes should launch based on fore-

casts and other factors, such as availability of backup landing strips in Kuwait and Bahrain.

Last week's storm lasted a few hours, long enough to cancel flight operations as crews began a cleanup detail. Wolfe said it was necessary because the fine dust can impair sensitive electronic equipment.

Sailors kept their faces covered with handkerchiefs as they wiped down aircraft. Seaman Apprentice Alberto Nava spent hours cleaning F/A-18 Hornets.

"It's not nice, but we gotta do it," he said.

Others battled wind gusts to hose down the flight deck.

"It's a pain in the butt more than anything else because you gotta clean it up," said Steven Cole, the leading chief petty officer for the carrier's Meteorology and Oceanography Department, which gives daily weather briefings.

His crewmembers had just finished giving one another high-fives after being off by just five minutes with their first dust-storm prediction.

"Forecasting's a challenge, it's such a closed-in basin with mountains all around us," he said.

Winds carry sand from the Mesopotamia Valley plain, turning it into a fine dust by the time it reaches the sea.

It's typically hazy in the Gulf, with seven to eight nautical miles of visibility. Visibility hit a half-mile during a storm on March 7. On Thursday, visibility was at zero for four hours.

"The dust came pretty fast; it went from unrestricted to quarter-mile visibility in 15 minutes," said Petty Officer 1st Class Matthew Moeller, a forecaster.

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Execution nears for Gulf War vet

The Associated Press

TERRE HAUTE, Ind. — With another war with Iraq looming, the federal government is poised to execute a decorated Gulf War veteran who claims brain damage from his exposure to Iraqi nerve gas led him to kill.

Unless President Bush intervenes, Louis Jones Jr. will be executed by lethal injection Tuesday at the U.S. Penitentiary near Terre Haute, Ind.

Jones, 53, admitted killing 19-year-old Pvt. Tracie Joy McBride in 1995 after kidnapping her from a Texas Air Force base and raping her.

But Jones has asked the president to commute his death sentence to life without parole, citing evidence he suffered severe, personality altering brain damage from exposure to sarin nerve gas in March 1991, days after the Gulf War ended.

That evidence, and Jones' decorated military career before his crime, make him different from the 23 other inmates on federal death row, said his attorney, Timothy Floyd.

"Compared with his whole life story up to that point, it's inexplicable that somebody like him could do something as horrible as he did," said Floyd, a law professor at Texas Tech University.

Jones, who has exhausted all his appeals, would be the third person — after Timothy McVeigh and drug kingpin Juan Garza — put to death by the federal government since 1963. He also would be the second Gulf War veteran, after McVeigh.

Federal prosecutors oppose Jones' clemency request, pointing to evidence of his aggressive behavior before the Gulf War, including four incidents in which he beat up co-workers or fellow soldiers.

On Feb. 18, 1995, two years after being honorably discharged from the Army, Jones abducted McBride at Goodfellow Air Force Base in San Angelo, Texas. He raped the 5-foot-2, 100-pound McBride in his apartment, drove her to a rural bridge and beat her to death with a tire iron.

Marines muscle in on Strong Man competition

BY MARK OLIVA

Stars and Stripes

CAMP COYOTE, Kuwait — Who are the baddest Marines in the desert?

Testosterone, sweat, a fair amount of trash talk and sand would determine.

The reward?

A half-eaten pack of cookies, a pack of Marlboro cigarettes and a pouch of Red Man tobacco.

Marines from Weapons Company, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment held a Strong Man competition Sunday to find out who were the toughest Marines this side of the Iraqi border.

Three teams of four Marines and a fourth team of four Navy corpsmen squared off, pushing Humvees and pulling pallets, among other things.

"We just kind of cooked up the idea really," said Navy

Petty Officer 1st Class Larry Tentinger, organizer of the homespun idea of a Strong Man competition.

"We've been working with different ideas for PT. During all this time waiting, we need a way to stay in shape, and the Marines like the physical aspect of the Strong Man.

"The winning team also gets bragging rights," he added.

The Strong Man was made up five separate events:

■ **Water jug carry:** Marines had to carry two 40-pound water jugs as far as they could for 60 seconds.

■ **Water bottle hold:** This was an endurance competition to see who could hold two 1½-liter water bottles with their arms straight out in front of them for the longest time.

■ **Dead-hang pull-ups:** Each Marine put on his flak jacket, complete with bullet-

proof inserts, to see who could do the most pull-ups.

■ **Pallet-pull:** Marines raced through the sand, each dragging a wooden pallet in the sand behind them.

■ **Humvee push:** Teams went head to head to find out how quickly they could push an armored Humvee for 50 yards in the sand.

"I wanted the events to have more stamina and endurance involved rather than outright strength," Tentinger said.

"Being able to carry things for a distance is a good measure of battlefield application for how we're training."

He admitted the competition is a little off the wall.

The events, he explained, were put together with the Marines' everyday gear.

"I haven't met a Marine yet who didn't like a little competition," Tentinger said. "This suits their mentality."

E-mail Mark Oliva at: olivam@pstripes.osd.mil

Middle schoolers punished for incident on bus

Stars and Stripes

RAF MILDENHALL, England — Six students at Lakenheath Middle School have been disciplined for engaging in sexual behavior on the school bus.

The incident took place March 5 on the bus ride home from the school at RAF Feltwell, according to Frank O'Gara, spokesman for Department of Defense Dependents Schools in Europe.

"The students involved have been punished in accordance with school rules and regulations," O'Gara said.

Specific punishments for the students, whose names are not released as a matter of DODDS policy, varied according to their involvement and the severity of their actions.

Penalties included suspension until the end of the current school quarter, which ends April 4, revocation of bus transportation for the remainder of the school year, including field trips, and other restrictions deemed appropriate.

O'Gara did not say how school officials learned of the incident, but parents of children on the bus were immediately contacted. A letter was sent to parents to prevent rumors from spreading.

After an investigation, discipline hearings were held and punishments determined.

"Any infractions of school rules endanger the safety and well-being of students," O'Gara said. "Inappropriate sexual misconduct on the buses is unacceptable and violates the right that each child has to ride in a secure, appropriate and healthy environment."

He said all school bus misconduct is addressed and trends are reported on a monthly basis to parents.

"Educators, commanders and unit first sergeants are also informed as part of a continuous, active effort to ensure a safe environment for students," O'Gara said.

Powder probably harmless

Stars and Stripes

ARLINGTON, Va. — White powder found on the luggage of a soldier who arrived in Washington from Germany and caused an Army medical nurse to suffer adverse reactions has been preliminarily labeled harmless, a hospital official said.

Analysts from Walter Reed Army Medical Center, where the patient was admitted, used a chemical agent monitor and concluded that the powder was not a highly toxic or harmful chemical, said Bill Swisher, a spokesman at Walter Reed.

The patient, whose name was not released, traveled from Landstuhl Army Medical Center, Germany, to Ramstein Air Base, to Andrews Air Force Base in Maryland and then to Walter Reed by bus. The patient recently was stationed in Afghanistan and medevac'd to Germany in the first week of March, said Swisher and Marie Shaw, a spokeswoman at Landstuhl.

As a precaution, the Walter Reed analysts are performing biological tests on the powder, but doubt it is a biological agent because it would not cause a person to suffer adverse reactions upon con-

tact — which is the case here, Swisher said. Results for a biological test can take up to 48 hours, he said.

The Criminal Investigation Division is investigating what the powder was, and how it got onto the luggage.

"One of our nursing staff noticed the white powder on the suitcase in what was a routine inspection for psychiatric patients coming to us," Swisher said. "Shortly after the discovery of the powder, he had itching on his hands and face and his eyes began burning and watering."

No one else at any of the locations involved suffered any reaction.

Rota pilot among Navy's top athletes

BY SCOTT SCHONAUER

Stars and Stripes

NAVAL STATION ROTA, Spain — A Rota-based Navy pilot known for his prowess on the racquetball court is the Navy's top athlete.

Lt. Chhem Young-Pen, 33, has been selected as one of the best in the armed forces for 2002. He and nine other military athletes will be honored March 28 at the annual U.S. Military Sports Association Pride of the Nation banquet in Arlington, Va.

Young-Pen was shocked when he learned of the selection.

"I feel pretty proud, pretty honored to be picked, considering the number of athletes and the different categories," he said.

Winners were selected by their services.

Young-Pen, a C-12 pilot stationed at Naval Station Rota, is the No. 1-ranked amateur racquetball player in the European Racquetball Federation, a subset of the professional International Racquetball Tour. In his first full year on the tour, he has dominated the league.

He won the British Open in October, the French Open in

Tops in their sport

The year's top athletes and their sports:

Men

Navy: Lt. Chhem Young-Pen, Naval Station Rota, Spain; racquetball.
Coast Guard: Lt. Adam A. Chamie, Coast Guard Training Center, Cape May, N.J.; powerlifting.
Army: Sgt. Dremlief Byers, Fort Carson, Colo.; wrestling.
Marine Corps: Capt. J. Daniel Hicks, Camp Butler, Okinawa, Japan; wrestling.
Air Force: Tech. Sgt. Anthony Patrick, Kadena Air Base, Japan; softball.

Women

Navy: Petty Officer Tina Eakin, USS Pinckney (San Diego, Calif.); triathlon/marathon.
Coast Guard: Lt. Amy B. Grable, Coast Guard Headquarters, Washington, D.C.; distance running.
Army: Pfc. Tina Wilson, Fort Carson, Colo.; wrestling.
Marine Corps: Capt. Kristin McCann, Marine Corps Base Quantico, Va.; distance running.
Air Force: 2nd Lt. Kristy Kuhlman, Los Angeles Air Force Base, Calif.; soccer.

For more information on the Armed Forces Sports Program, see www.armedforcessports.com

January and was the No. 1 seed at the 1 seed at the Dutch Open this past weekend.

Young-Pen, whose family immigrated to Seattle from Cambodia when he was 6 years old, joined the Navy after graduating from high school. He later got a degree in electrical engineering and became an officer and aviator.

He flew P-3 aircraft before coming to Rota to fly C-12 propeller planes, a transport aircraft that ferries servicemembers between bases in Europe.

He started playing racquetball about 12 years ago when he was a Navy petty officer, and the game has become his passion.

"It's just great exercise for me to get on the court to sweat," he said in an interview with Stars and Stripes in December.

"The athletic ability to dive, get to every ball to cover the court, it's amazing to me the amount of physical ability it does take to move around such a small court. The ball moves so fast and it's a lot harder than it sounds like."

"It's a great sport."

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Shoddy lab work tainted FBI cases

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — More than six years after the FBI crime laboratory was rocked by controversy, the Justice Department has identified about 3,000 criminal cases that could have been affected by flawed science and skewed testimony.

It is letting prosecutors decide whether to tell defendants about the problems.

Government officials told The Associated Press they are aware of between 100 and 150 cases in which prosecutors have alerted defendants of problems they concluded were material to verdicts.

None has resulted in overturned convictions, they said.

One of those cases already has reached the Florida Supreme Court, which ruled earlier this month that convicted murderer George Trepal was not entitled to a new trial despite evidence the FBI's chief toxicology chemist gave inaccurate testimony.

The identification of cases and prosecutorial reviews are the final stages of a scandal that shook the FBI during the mid-1990s when a senior chemist at the famed crime lab went public with allegations of shoddy work, tainted evidence and skewed testimony.

A Justice Department internal investigation concluded in 1997 that 13 lab tech-

nicians made scientific errors in cases or slanted testimony to help prosecutors. Several were reprimanded, but none was fired or prosecuted.

FBI and Justice officials say they continue to review cases handled by those technicians to determine if there are problems that could have affected verdicts. But they say the lab today is much different after a series of changes designed to ensure scientific and forensic analyses are subjected to checks and balances.

"I had confidence in the results of FBI laboratory exams even prior to 1998, but today my confidence level is even higher after the quality review process we have implemented," FBI lab director Dwight Adams said in a recent interview.

Those changes, Adams said, include a requirement that all lab examiners' work be reviewed first by another technician with the same expertise, then by a supervisor. In addition, the lab has earned and maintained accreditation from the scientific community every year since 1998, and it just moved into a new 500,000-square-foot, state-of-the-art complex.

The FBI lab's woes came to light in the mid-1990s after FBI chemist Frederic Whitehurst went public with allegations of wrongdoing and shoddy work at the lab.

Lawyer: Abductor considers teen his wife

The Associated Press

SALT LAKE CITY — The self-proclaimed prophet accused of abducting Elizabeth Smart told his attorney he considers the girl his wife and wants the 15-year-old to be renamed "Remnant Who Will Return."

"He wanted me to tell the world that she is his wife, and he still loves her and knows that she still loves him, that no harm came to her during their relationship and the adventure that went on," attorney Larry Long said in an interview aired late Sunday on Salt Lake City's KUTV.

Long, who said he had agreed earlier Sunday to become Brian David Mitchell's attorney, was speaking for his client for the first time.

Long said Mitchell — whom he referred to as "the perpetrator" — would consider the girl's nine-month disappearance a "call from God," not a kidnapping.

Smart, who was snatched from her bedroom June 5, was found Wednesday with Mitchell and his wife, Wanda Barzee, in Sandy, Utah, when they were stopped by police. Mitchell and Barzee remained in jail awaiting charges expected to be filed Monday.

Long suggested that giving his client a light sentence could encourage kidnappers to keep their captives alive.

He also said Mitchell, 49, wanted to be known as Emmanuel David Isaiah, and wanted Barzee, 57, to be called Hephzibah Eladah Isaiah. Mitchell's name for Elizabeth, Long said, is Shear Jashub Isaiah, or "Remnant Who Will Return."

He said his client, who did handyman work at the Smart house one day in November 2001, was on a fruit-only diet in jail.

"I found him to be very intelligent, very knowledgeable, very coherent and very articulate in his expression of his views," Long said.

Calls to Long's office from The Associated Press were not returned Sunday, and calls to his home went unanswered.

Mitchell, an excommunicated Mormon, wrote a rambling manifesto last year espousing the virtues of polygamy. The Mormon church has long distanced itself from polygamy and excommunicates those who practice it.

No details have been released about any abuse Elizabeth may have suffered while captive.

Salt Lake City detective Dwayne Baird said police interviewers are taking care not to traumatize her with their questions.

N. Korea: Sovereignty on the line

BY JAE-SUK YOO

The Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea — North Korea warned Monday that its sovereignty is at stake in the standoff over its nuclear development, while the U.S. ambassador in South Korea said the North has an "irrational fear" of the United States.

North Korea's official Rodong Sinmun newspaper said Washington's rejection of direct talks was "little short of refusing to solve the nuclear issue."

Washington wants to resolve the issue through talks involving other countries, but North Korea insists the dispute is only with the United States and wants a nonaggression treaty with Washington.

"The nuclear issue on the Korean Peninsula is a very crucial problem related to who beats whom," the North Korean newspaper said. "It will decide whether the DPRK's sovereignty will be trampled down by the U.S. or protected." DPRK is short for the North's official name, the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

North Korea accuses the United States of inciting the tension over its suspected nuclear weapons programs as a pretext for an invasion.

In Seoul, U.S. Ambassador Thomas Hubbard said North Korea's actions posed a threat to worldwide stability because of the threat of nuclear proliferation. He repeated the Bush administration's stance that Washington wants to solve the nuclear dispute peacefully, but all options are open.

"They seem to be sustained only by an irrational fear of the United States, and an equally irrational adulation of their own leadership, both of which they have been taught for decades in complete isolation from the rest of the world," Hubbard said.

A South Korean presidential adviser said North Korea has shown no signs of reactivating a nuclear reprocessing facility that could enable the production of bombs within months.

There are concerns that North Korea's next step in the standoff will be to reactivate the reprocessing plant in a bid to pressure Washington into negotiations. U.S. officials say the facility could produce enough weapons-grade plutonium from spent fuel rods to make several more nuclear bombs.

Mystery illness could be new strain of flu

BY EMMA ROSS

The Associated Press

LONDON — A deadly, mysterious respiratory illness spread largely among health care workers in Asia could be a new strain of flu or even an exotic virus passed from animals to people, a health official said Sunday.

Probably the most feared by health experts, however, would be a new and deadly strain of flu.

The illness, which carries flu-like symptoms, has killed nine people — seven in Asia and two in North America. Its rapid spread in southeast Asia in recent weeks caused a rare worldwide health alert to be issued on Saturday.

The ninth victim, a nurse in Hanoi, Vietnam, died Sunday.

Health officials say it may be several more days before they are able to identify the disease. However, they said several of its features suggest it is caused by a virus, which can often be difficult to pinpoint quickly using standard lab tests.

"Certainly influenza is on the minds of many people," said Dr. David Heymann, communicable diseases chief for the World Health Organization.

Lab tests have ruled out some varieties of flu as well as some viruses that cause hemorrhagic fever. However, many other possibilities remain, Heymann said.

Those include "a new strain of influenza" or such exotic diseases as the closely related Hendra and Nipah viruses — both newly recognized, causing flu-like symptoms and capable of being spread from animals to people.

"If it really is the flu, it could be we have a new organism that could cause a pandemic," said Dr. R. Bradley Sack, director of the international travel clinic at Johns Hopkins University in Maryland. "People immediately start thinking of 1917," the year a worldwide flu epidemic killed at least 20 million people.

Experts discounted the possibility that terrorism is the source and believe it almost certainly is a contagious infection

What is known about SARS

Q: What are the symptoms?

A fever of about 101, coughing and shortness of breath. Other possible symptoms include headache, muscular stiffness, loss of appetite, confusion, rash and diarrhea.

Q: How quickly can someone get the disease after being exposed to it?

Three to seven days.

Q: How does someone catch it?

It appears to spread through close contact, such as between family members or between patient and doctor. Experts believe it is spread through coughing, sneezing and other contact with nasal fluids.

Q: What causes it?

Researchers don't know whether it is caused by a bacteria or a virus, and they may not know the answer for several more days.

Q: How is it treated?

Those suspected of having SARS are being quarantined. The best treatment is unclear because different medicines have been used in different hospitals.

Q: What are the chances of recovering from it?

So far there are nine fatalities among the 150 most recent cases.

Q: Is it dangerous to travel in Asia?

U.S. health officials said travelers should consider postponing trips to countries at risk. Those who have traveled to Hong Kong or Guangdong province in China, or Hanoi, Vietnam, are being told to monitor their health for seven days. If a fever and shortness of breath develop, they are advised to see a doctor.

Sources: World Health Organization; U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

that spreads most easily from victims to their doctors, nurses and families through coughing, sneezing and other contact with nasal fluids.

"Nothing about that pattern suggests bioterrorism," said Dr. Julie Gerberding, head of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

The illness is being called "severe acute respiratory syndrome," or SARS. The incubation period appears to be three to seven days. It often begins with a high fever and other flu-like symptoms, such as headache and sore throat. Victims typically develop coughs, pneumonia, shortness of breath and other breathing difficulties. Death results from respiratory failure.

The WHO estimates that perhaps 500 people in all have been sickened if an earlier outbreak that peaked last month in Guangdong province in China turns out to be part of the same disease, as they suspect it is.

Investigators suspect a virus is involved.

Measures against illness taken at Asian airports

The Associated Press

HONG KONG — Airports screened passengers for flu-like symptoms on Monday as worried travelers wore masks to ward off infection from a mystery illness, which New Zealand's prime minister warned might escalate into a

global pandemic like one 85 years ago that killed millions.

The Geneva-based World Health Organization said airline travelers could be spreading the atypical pneumonia, which it declared "a worldwide health threat" following nine deaths and hundreds of other suspected cases.

St. Paddy's Day parades go on

BY KAREN MATTHEWS

The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Springlike temperatures helped turn up the already festive mood of thousands of revelers at Monday's St. Patrick's Day Parade despite evidence of heightened police security and the possible war with Iraq.

"I'm representing Ireland and New York today. It's a day for happiness and to be together," said Greg Packer of Huntington, on Long Island, who sported a bright green wig and a painted green mustache. "It's a day to take in the Irish culture that we have in the city."

As thousands lined up 10 deep along Fifth Avenue, the parade — a New York tradition since 1766 — stepped off at 44th Street and made its way north to 86th Street. By noon, the temperature was 66 degrees.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg, among several scheduled officials that included Gov. George Pataki and former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, was greeted with shouts of "We love you, Mike!"

There were few signs that a war with Iraq was on people's minds.

Among the sea of green hats, shirts and balloons, a lone sign that read "Honk For Our Troops" was a reminder.

Road closures and a high police visibility were part of the security plan for the parade, which attracts 150,000 marchers and 2 million spectators. A no-tolerance policy on alcohol and backpack checks were implemented at the parade.

The Fire Department's Emerald Society Pipe and Drums, displaying small American flags from the pipes, was among the many bands marching in the parade. It has performed at 400 funerals and memorials for the 343 firefighters — including two band players — who perished in the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Phyllis Stacker, of Clark, N.J., who says she is "half-Irish," comes to the parade every year because "It makes me so proud. It's a great thrill for myself and my family."

The mayor began the day by hosting a breakfast reception at Gracie Mansion and then attended Mass at St. Patrick's Cathedral led by Cardinal Edward Egan.

Bloomberg has been criticized for marching in Monday's parade by a group of gay and lesbian Irish-American politicians.

In the Fifth Avenue event, organized by the Ancient Order of Hibernians, gays are barred from marching under their own banner, as many other groups do.

The mayor has compared the event to a dinner party he has been invited to but has no control over how it is organized.

AUTO RACING

DARLINGTON, S.C. — Ricky Craven won the Carolina Dodge Dealers 400 by inches Sunday, finishing alongside Kurt Busch after their cars hit repeatedly on the closing straightaway.

The unofficial margin of victory was two thousandths of a second — the smallest since NASCAR introduced electronic timing in 1993.

Craven earned the second win of his career by charging from fourth with 23 laps to go. He moved up to second place on lap 271 of the 293-lap event when pole-sitter Elliott Sadler bounced off the wall and lost ground.

BASKETBALL

NEW YORK — The NBA players' union sent a letter to members last month warning them about ephedra, the supplement linked to the death of Orioles pitcher Steve Bechler during spring training.

Ephedra is not banned by the NBA.

Union director Billy Hunter sent a letter alerting players to the Bechler case and warning them to consult a doctor before taking anything containing ephedra, union spokesman Dan Wasserman said Sunday.

Sports in brief

GOLF

PALM BEACH GARDENS, Fla. — Justin Leonard shot a 5-under 67, broke the Honda Classic record with a 24-under 264 and beat Davis Love III and Chad Campbell by one stroke for his eighth career tour victory on Sunday.

Leonard, paired in the final round with his close friend Love for the first time since the 1997 PGA Championship at Winged Foot, rallied from two strokes down over the final 13 holes to win \$900,000.

TUCSON, Ariz. — Wendy Doolan overcame soggy conditions and the pursuit of more prominent players to shoot a 5-under-par 65 and win the LPGA Tour's season opener by three strokes.

The 34-year-old Australian did what she had to do — bounce back from a bogey with a birdie on the next hole — to blunt charges by Grace Park and Betsy King to capture her second title, the Welch's-Fry's Championship.

TENNIS

INDIAN WELLS, Calif. — Lleyton Hewitt and girlfriend Kim Clijsters have matching Pacific Life Open titles.

Top-ranked Hewitt beat a weary Gustavo Kuerten 6-1, 6-1 to defend his championship, right after top-seeded Clijsters defeated Lindsay Davenport 6-4, 7-5 in the women's final Sunday.

BOXING

CHICAGO — Brazil's Acilino Freitas retained his WBA and WBO junior lightweight titles Saturday night, stopping Mexico's Juan Carlos Ramirez in the fourth round.

Referee Gino Rodriguez stopped the fight at 19 seconds of the fourth round after Freitas pinned Ramirez against the ropes and landed a series of punches that left the challenger defenseless.

SOCCER

TEGUCIGALPA, Honduras — Amado Guevara scored his second goal in the 85th minute as nine-time Honduran champion CD Motagua tied the MLS champion Los Angeles Galaxy 2-2 Sunday in the CONCACAF champions cup round of 16.

Carlos Ruiz scored in the 21st minute and Alexi Lalas in the 62nd for the Galaxy.

Guevara scored on a 28th-minute penalty kick after Los Angeles defender Tyrone Marshall was called for a hand ball in the penalty area.

PANAMA CITY, Panama — Panama's Arabe Unido defeated Major League Soccer's Columbus Crew 2-1 Sunday in the first round of the CONCACAF regional champions soccer tournament.

Augusto Salinas scored on a penalty kick just seven minutes into the game. But the Crew, playing with 10 men in the second half after an ejection, scored on a shot by Edson Buddle at 59 minutes.

SKIING

PARK CITY, Utah — Two-time Olympian Caroline Lalive had surgery to repair knee ligaments she tore in a crash earlier this month at a World Cup event.

Lalive had surgery last week in Vail, Colo., and is recovering at home, the U.S. Ski team said Sunday.

Lalive was injured March 1 when she caught an edge with one of her skis as she approached the finish line in a World Cup downhill race near Innsbruck, Austria. Her skis flipped into the air as she went down and one landed on her back.

From The Associated Press

Brewery magnate Coors dies

Joseph Coors, who used his brewing fortune to support President Reagan and help create the conservative Heritage Foundation, has died at age 85.

Coors, whose grandfather founded Golden-based Adolph Coors Co. in 1873, died Saturday in Rancho Mirage, Calif., after a three-month battle with lymphatic cancer.

In the 1970s, Coors began providing money and his famous name to start the Heritage Foundation, the influential think tank in Washington, D.C. Even earlier, he served as one of Reagan's advisers and backers in the "kitchen Cabinet," which financed Reagan's political career from the governorship of California to the White House. The two first met in Palm Springs, Calif., in 1967.

"Without Joe Coors, the Heritage Foundation wouldn't exist — and the conservative movement it nurtures would be immeasurably poorer," the foundation's president, Edwin Feulner, said in a statement.

In 1988 he retired as chief operating officer, a position to which he was appointed in 1980. He remained a director until three years ago.

His brother, Bill Coors, serves as vice chairman for Adolph Coors Co. while his son, Peter Coors, is chairman. Serving as president and chief executive officer is W. Leo Kiely III, the first person outside the Coors family to hold those positions.

Coors and his brother worked in the same office, their desks not more than a foot apart. But Bill Coors, appointed as chairman in 1954, said their politics were quite different.

Joseph Coors used his chemical engineering background to refine the brewer's cold-filtered beer manufacturing

Faces 'n' places

system, which he created with his brother Bill. The brothers also initiated what is believed to have been the first large-scale recycling program by offering a one cent return on Coors' aluminum cans in 1959.

Rudy Giuliani story on TV

Actor James Woods says he considers former Mayor Rudolph Giuliani an "American hero" and "fought tooth and nail" to portray him as such in an upcoming television film.

The actor, concerned that a "lunatic liberal" Hollywood would vilify Giuliani or present him as overly conservative, also says he insisted on approving the script for "Rudy: The Rudy Giuliani Story," before agreeing to play the part.

"Our business is notorious for being almost lunatic liberal," Woods told The New York Times in Sunday editions. "There's sort of a loony fringe that's way over the top and out of step with mainstream America."

"But if they were interested in presenting the liberal jihad against Rudy, then I wasn't really interested in participating," he added.

The film will be broadcast stateside on the USA Network on March 30.

Farrell is father-to-be

Actor Colin Farrell isn't saying who's carrying his baby, but a magazine says model Kim Bordenave is the expectant mother.

A source quoted in this week's US Weekly said Bordenave has been "going around telling friends she's pregnant" and that it is "one hundred percent [Farrell's] baby."

A representative of Los Angeles-based M Models, which books Bordenave, said the model is "not working for a while," but declined to comment on whether she was pregnant.

The Dublin-born Farrell, star of "New Recruit," confirmed his impending fatherhood in an interview Friday on England's ITV1.

Spears vs. Skechers

Lawyers for Britney Spears and the footwear company Skechers are dismissing each other's lawsuits as "ludicrous" and "bogus."

Spears filed a \$1.5 million breach of agreement lawsuit against Skechers in December, claiming the company failed to adequately pay her for marketing a line of roller skates and accessories.

Skechers responded Wednesday with a \$10 million lawsuit, accusing the pop diva of fraud and breach of contract. According to Skechers, Spears refused to cooperate with designers and marketers in bringing out the products.

Cuban singer gets star

Israel Lopez, the 84-year-old Cuban bass player credited with helping to create the mambo, was honored with a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame.

Lopez, better known as "Cachao," received the walk's 2,219th star Friday in front of the King King nightclub, where a Cuban band performed in his honor after the ceremony.

On hand for the star's unveiling were actors Edward James Olmos and Andy Garcia. Garcia, who is Cuban-born, produced and directed a 1993 documentary on Lopez that helped revitalize his career.

From The Associated Press

UCLA's Lavin fired after 10-19 season

BY BETH HARRIS

The Associated Press

LOS ANGELES — Steve Lavin was fired as UCLA's basketball coach Monday after the team's first losing season since 1948.

Lavin, who took the Bruins to the final 16 of the NCAA tournament five times in six years, was told about the expected move in a meeting with new athletic director Dan Guerrero.

"Decisions like this are always tough," Guerrero said. "However, if this program is to regain its place among the nation's

elite, I felt a change was required."

UCLA went 10-19 overall and 6-12 in Pac-10 play, and its season ended with a 75-74 loss to Oregon in the conference tournament semifinals Friday.

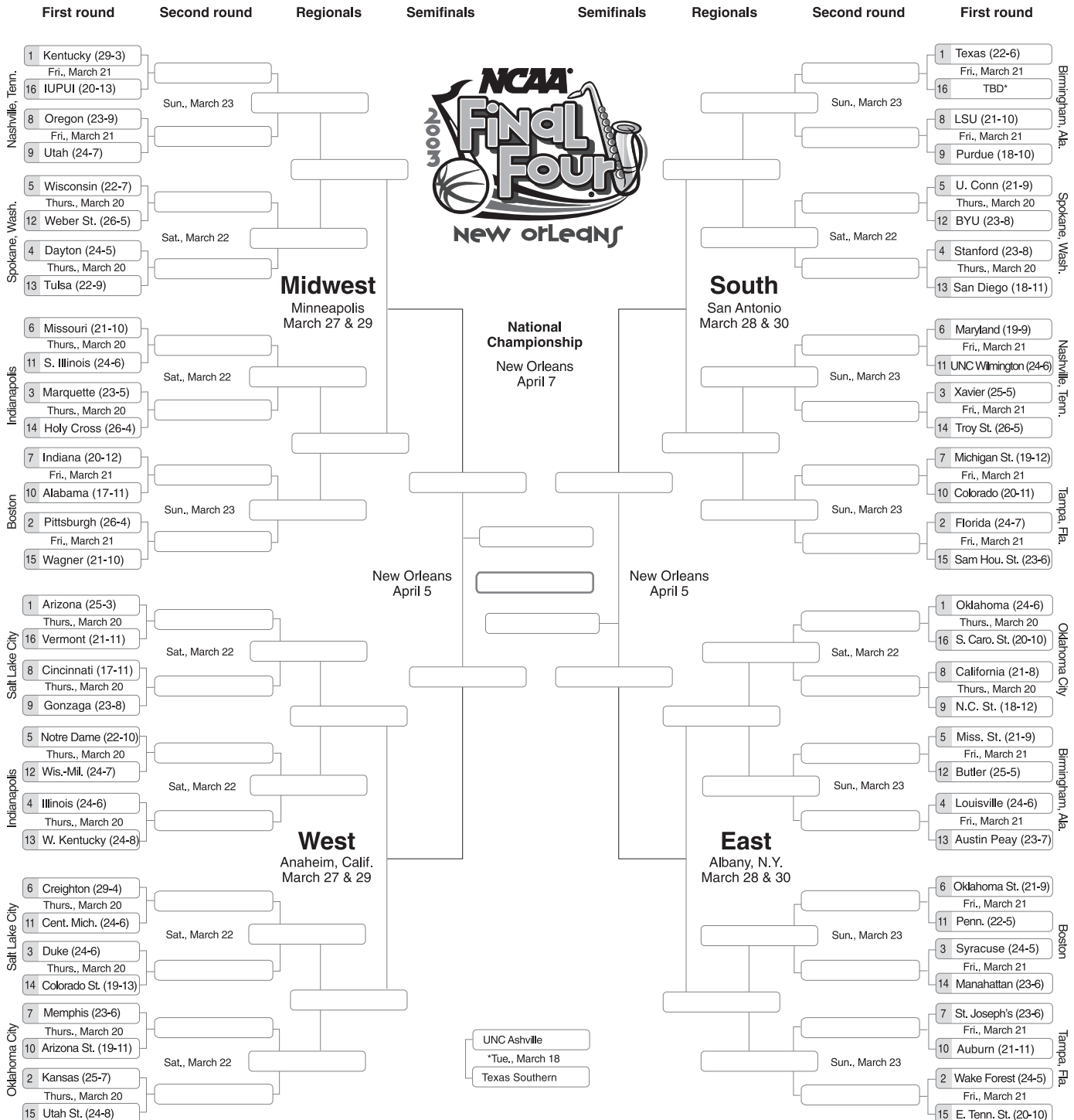
It was a stunningly poor year for a program that has won a record 11 national championships: 10 under John Wooden

in the 1960s and 1970s, and one under Jim Harrick in 1995 — when Lavin was an assistant coach.

Lavin was promoted to the top job in November 1996, when Harrick was fired, and went 145-78 overall.

See UCLA on Page 13

2003 NCAA Division I men's basketball championship



UConn women being chased by 63 teams

BY CHUCK SCHOFFNER

The Associated Press

LSU joined regulars Connecticut, Tennessee and Duke as No. 1 seeds Sunday in the NCAA women's basketball tournament, which might have some

suspense now that UConn actually lost a game.

It's the first No. 1 seeding for LSU (27-3), which beat Tennessee in the finals of the Southeastern Conference tournament and tops the bracket in the West Regional.

Connecticut (31-1), the defending na-

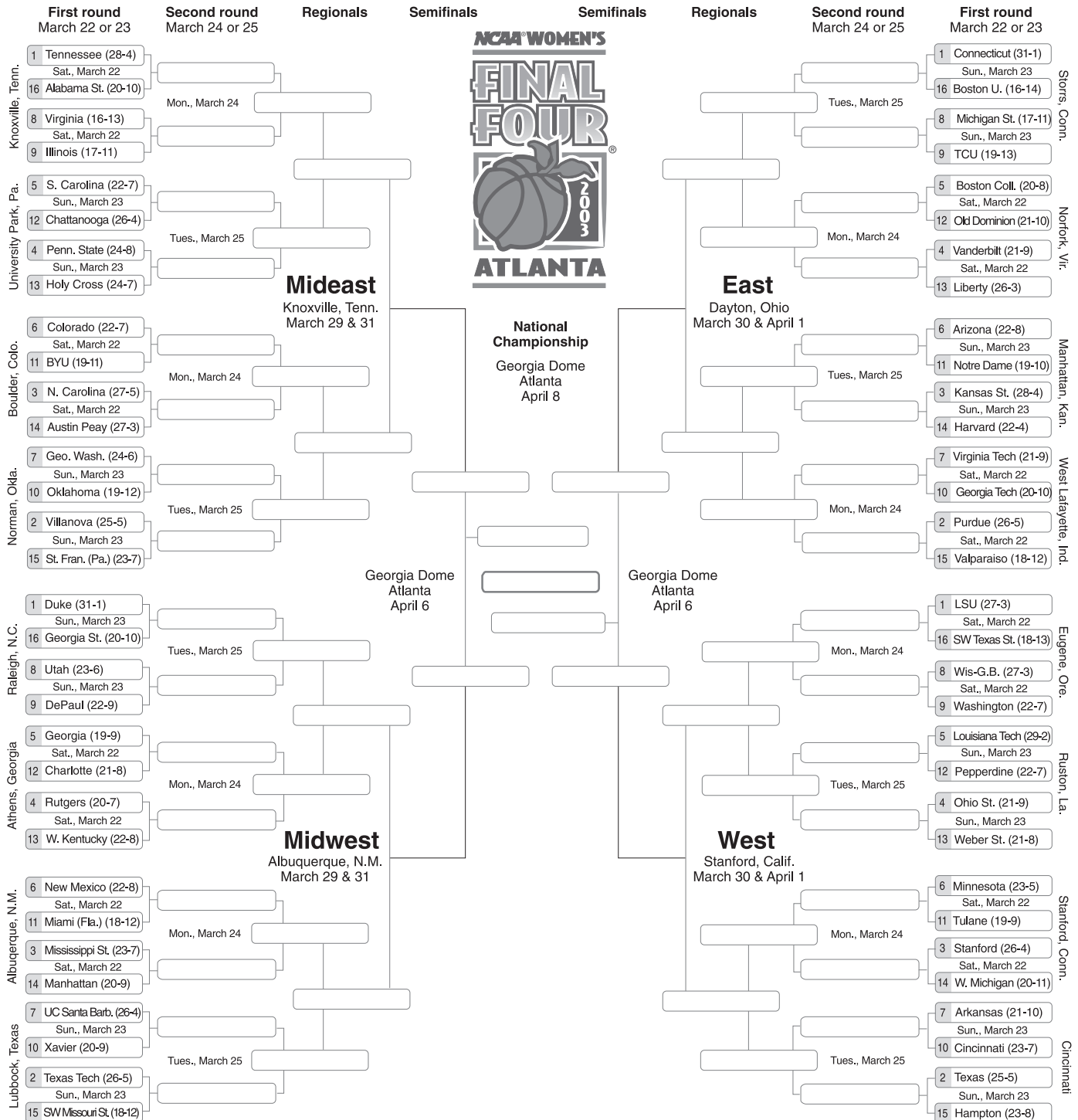
tional champion, was made the top seed in the East, Tennessee (28-4) in the Midwest and Duke (31-1) in the Midwest.

Connecticut, a No. 1 seed for the ninth time in 10 years, remains the favorite for the national title, although the Huskies no longer are trying to extend a long winning streak.

Their 52-48 loss to Villanova in the Big East tournament finals broke a 70-game streak that was the longest in NCAA women's history, showed that Connecticut was vulnerable on a given night and gave hope to others.

See WOMEN on Page 13

2003 NCAA Division I women's basketball championship



NCAA's chosen four

Kansas snub only surprise among No. 1 seeds

BY MICHAEL MAROT

The Associated Press

INDIANAPOLIS — College basketball coaches and players had little to complain about. That doesn't mean it was easy handing out the at-large berths in the NCAA tournament.

Arizona, Kentucky, Oklahoma and Texas earned the top seeds in the 65-team field that begins play Tuesday, with Arizona and Texas among the 34 at-large selections.

"College basketball, because of the parity, is getting tougher and tougher to select the 34 teams," said Jim Livengood, selection committee chairman and athletic director at Arizona. "This group did the very best job it could."

"The hardest thing is when you can select only 34, the committee has a tough, tough job to do, particularly in those last four or five picks."

But the most challenging part of this year's tournament might be one issue the NCAA cannot control — the possibility of war.

NCAA officials were busy making contingency plans for security and possible postponements, but the event will not be canceled, tournament managing director Greg Shaheen said.

"Our objective is to honor and respect the times we're living in, but to understand that life must go on," he said.

While the draw went pretty much as expected, there were some minor arguments.

There were the usual concerns about teams playing close to home, especially second-seeded Florida, which will play in Tampa despite closing the season with three straight losses.

And there were the expected contentions about seeding in an era when parity has made it difficult to separate the best from the rest. The most glaring argument was that of Texas' No. 1 seed, the first in school history.

Some contended the Longhorns were not deserving of a top seed after Friday's exit in the Big 12 quarterfinals, and that Kansas, the conference's regular-season champs, should have gotten a No. 1 spot.

Instead, Kansas is seeded second in the West Region and will play at Oklahoma City in the first round.

Livengood acknowledged it was a tough choice.

"Was Kansas a No. 1? Maybe," Livengood said. "But you can only go with four."

The announcement marked the end to a scandal-plagued season in which three schools — Fresno State, Michigan and Georgia — removed them-

Teams by conference

Big 12 — 6
Southeastern — 6
Big Ten — 5
Pacific 10 — 5
Atlantic Coast — 4
Big East — 4
Conference USA — 4
Atlantic 10 — 3
Mountain West — 3
Horizon — 2
Missouri Valley — 2
West Coast — 2

selves from consideration because of possible NCAA violations or academic fraud.

St. Bonaventure wasn't allowed to participate in the Atlantic 10 Conference tournament because of an ineligible player, and Villanova ended the season with only five scholarship players after 12 were suspended for unauthorized phone calls.

Georgia, a virtual lock for the tournament, pulled out Monday, a decision that likely opened the door for either Brigham Young (23-8) or Butler (25-5), which were last two at-large teams selected.

"I don't think you could really say or predict what effect a team not being in the tournament may have had on a team that is in the tournament," Livengood said.

There were few surprises. Arizona received the top seed in the West, Kentucky in the Midwest, Oklahoma in the East and Texas in the South. It was the fourth straight year that two teams from the same conference — Oklahoma and Texas play in the Big 12 — were top seeds.

Duke was the No. 3 seed in the West,

ending a five-year run of earning top seeds.

The Big 12 and Southeastern Conference each sent six teams to the tournament, and Georgia would have given the SEC a seventh.

Five teams each from the Big Ten and Pac-10 were selected, while the Atlantic Coast Conference, Conference USA and Big East are sending four each.

Boston College isn't one of them. As the brackets were being announced on television, the Eagles grew more nervous.

"Everyone felt a little bit uncomfortable," coach Al Skinner said. "But we didn't think, until they announced the last game, that we wouldn't be up there."

Other schools that were left out included Seton Hall, Ohio State, Tennessee and UNLV. College of Charleston, at 24-7, had the most wins of any team not taken, and Texas Tech wasn't even listed on the NCAA's "other teams considered" although Livengood disputed that.

The decision ended Bob Knight's streak of 16 straight trips to the tournament. He made it from 1986-00 at Indiana, and last year with Texas Tech. He didn't coach in 2001.

North Carolina holds the record with 27 straight appearances, but the Tar Heels are not in the field for the second straight season, and UCLA (10-19) ended its string of 14 straight appearances, third on the current list behind Arizona's 19 and Indiana's 18.

"I don't think it ever gets old hat," Wildcats coach Lute Olson said. "When you get to the NCAA playoffs, I think it's the most exciting time in sports."

For Livengood's committee, however, the similarities made it tough to choose.

The tournament begins Tuesday in Dayton, Ohio, with the play-in game. Big South champion North Carolina Asheville, at 14-16 the only team in the field with a losing record, will play Texas Southern, the champion of the Southwestern Athletic Conference.

Spurned

Teams that failed to get at-large bids, with Rating Percentage Index:
Boston Coll. (18-11): Won Big East Division regular-season title. RPI: 49
College of Charleston (24-7): Southern Conference regular-season champ has most wins of any non-tournament team. RPI: 67
Ohio State (17-14): Reached Big Ten tournament final. RPI: 54
Seton Hall (17-12): Won 10 of last 13 games. RPI: 42
Tennessee (17-11): Went 9-7 in SEC; defeated Florida, Mississippi State and Georgia. RPI: 60
Texas Tech (18-12): Beat Texas in Big 12 tournament, lost to Oklahoma in overtime in tournament semifinal. RPI: 48
UNLV (21-10): Won eight of last 11 games, including victories over BYU and Utah. RPI: 40
Wyoming (20-10): Was 16-3 on Feb. 1. RPI: 63

Women

Continued from Page 12

Connecticut, which also won national titles in 1995 and 2000, opens at home Sunday against Boston University, which made the NCAA tournament for the first time and as a reward gets a team stinging from its first loss since the 2001 Final Four.

The Huskies would advance to the East Regional in Dayton if they win their first two games.

Tennessee, a top seed for the 14th time in 16 years, could play its way to the Final Four in Atlanta without leaving home. The Lady Vols are hosting first- and second-round games and also have the Midwest Regional on their court. They open against Alabama State on Saturday.

Duke and LSU have a much more challenging road to the Final Four because neither will play at home in the tournament and both could play games on the opponent's home court.

Duke, a No. 1 seed for the third straight year, plays Georgia State in Raleigh, N.C., on Sunday and also would play the second round in Raleigh.

The Blue Devils then would head to the Pit at New Mexico for the Midwest Regional. New Mexico is the No. 6 seed in that regional and is hosting first- and second-round games.

LSU would advance to the West Regional at Stanford if it survives the first two rounds and might have to play the third-seeded Cardinal in the regional finals. LSU goes to Eugene, Ore., for its subregional and plays Southwest Texas State in the first round Saturday.

Previously, first- and second-round games were played on the courts of the 16 highest seeds. The sites for those games this year were chosen last summer, with the agreement that the host teams would be placed there if they made the tournament.

Duke and LSU will play at the only two sites that don't have a home team — North Carolina State and Oregon.

Subregionals will be played Saturday and Monday at Colorado, Georgia, New Mexico, Old Dominion, Oregon, Purdue, Stanford and Tennessee.

The other first- and second-round games are Sunday and Tuesday at Cincinnati, Connecticut, Kansas State, Louisiana Tech, North Carolina State, Oklahoma, Penn State and Texas Tech.

The Midwest and Midwest regionals are March 29 and 31, with the East and West to be played March 30 and April 1. The Final Four is April 6 and 8 at the Georgia Dome.

Pairings for the national semifinals are Midwest vs. Midwest and East vs. West. That sets up the possibility of Connecticut meeting Duke or Tennessee for the national championship. The Huskies defeated both this season.

LSU got the nod over Texas as the final No. 1 seed, mainly due to its SEC tournament victory over Tennessee, said Cheryl Marra, who chairs the selection committee.

Texas is the No. 2 seed in the West and its Big 12 rival, Texas Tech, was seeded second in the Midwest. Texas won the regular-season league title and beat Tech in the championship game of the conference tournament.

Villanova's victory over Connecticut and a 25-5 record helped the Wildcats become the No. 2 seed in the Midwest. Big Ten tournament champion Purdue is seeded second in the East.

The SEC and Big East have the most teams in the tournament with seven each.

Along with LSU and Tennessee, the SEC has Arkansas, Georgia, Mississippi State, South Carolina and Vanderbilt. Besides Connecticut and Villanova, the Big East has Boston College, Miami, Notre Dame, Rutgers and Virginia Tech.

The Big Ten got six teams into the field, while Conference USA matched the more highly regarded Big 12 with five teams.

Virginia (16-13) became the first at-large team in the tournament with more than 12 losses. The Cavaliers won eight of their last 10, including an upset of North Carolina.

Miami (18-12) made it after finishing seventh in the Big East, an indication of the selection committee's high regard for that league this season.

UCLA: Lavin knew the end was coming

Continued from Page 11

"I take the long view, and I am grateful for the experience of teaching at one of the world's great universities," Lavin said.

"I will remember most the lasting friendships I've made, and I remain optimistic about the bright future of the program."

Lavin had five years remaining on his contract. He will receive a buyout of one year of his full salary of \$578,000, and four years at the base salary of \$153,000.

Guerrero noted Lavin's accomplishments, including his teams' NCAA tournament showings. Duke's Mike Krzyzewski is the only other coach to take a team to the NCAA tournament's round of 16 in five of his first six seasons.

Lavin's best showing was reaching

the final eight in 1997, the year the team won his only conference title.

"But my assessment of future success had to be based upon what I have observed this year," Guerrero said. "My conclusion was that for UCLA basketball to flourish, a change in leadership was necessary."

Lavin expected to be fired. The team had not had a losing record since going 12-13 55 years ago under coach Wilbur Johns — who was replaced the next season by Wooden.

This season's record is the worst for the Bruins since 1942, when they were 5-18 under Johns.

In January, when criticism of Lavin reached a peak, Guerrero said he would evaluate the coach at the end of the season. At that time, Lavin denied he had considered resigning.

Guerrero fired football coach Bob Toledo in December after seven years.

The men's basketball season began with two rare exhibition losses, then an overtime loss to San Diego in the opening game before defeats to Duke, Kansas and Michigan.

It looked like Lavin might have rescued his job with wins at Washington and Washington State to start the Pac-10 schedule, but a nine-game losing streak followed. Other lows included being swept by crosstown rival Southern California for the first time in 10 years, and a 10-game conference losing streak.

There were 10 losses at Pauley Pavilion, the most in a season, and the average attendance of 8,348 was the lowest since 1993 in the 12,819-seat arena.

At times, the Bruins were booed off their home floor, and fans wore T-shirts that said "Lose Lavin" and "Fire Lavin Immediately."

76ers 92, Nets 87

EAST RUTHERFORD, N.J. — Allen Iverson hit a go-ahead layup with just over a minute remaining, and Philadelphia moved within a half-game of first place in the Atlantic Division with a 92-87 victory over New Jersey on Sunday.

Iverson finished with 31 points and the 76ers held the Nets without a basket for the final 8:56 in winning for the 14th time in 16 games since the All-Star break.

Eric Snow added 21 points, including three free throws in the final 15 seconds, in helping Philadelphia rally from a 13-point second-half deficit to beat the Nets for the second time since Feb. 16.

Jason Kidd had 23 points to lead the Nets, who missed their final 12 shots.

Cavaliers 122, Jazz 95

CLEVELAND — Ricky Davis had 28 points, a career-high 12 assists and nine rebounds as Cleveland snapped a seven-game losing streak.

After the Jazz scored with six seconds left, Davis took an inbounds pass and was ready to attempt a shot at the wrong basket to get his 10th rebound. Utah's DeShawn Stevenson wrapped his arms around Davis before the attempt and was whistled for a foul. Davis made the two free throws to complete the scoring.

Jumaine Jones scored 23 points and Milt Palacio added a career-high 20 for the Cavaliers, who have a league-worst record of 12-53.

Mark Jackson of the Jazz overtook Magic Johnson for second place on the NBA's career assist list. Jackson set up a 22-foot baseline jumper by Calbert Cheaney with 8:35 remaining for his 10,142nd assist and fifth of the game.

Timberwolves 111, Trail Blazers 95

MINNEAPOLIS — Kevin Garnett had his fifth triple-double of the season and Wally Szczerbiak scored 20 points. Garnett finished with 17 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists for the Timberwolves, who had lost their previous two games.

Minnesota gained ground on the Blazers for the fourth playoff spot in the Western Conference and home-court advantage. Portland entered the game with a 1/2-game lead on the Timberwolves.

Minnesota's Joe Smith, who started in place of injured Rasho Nesterovic, scored 12 points on 6-for-10 shooting. Nesterovic missed his first game of the season after spraining his right ankle in Friday's loss to the Lakers.

Mavericks 129, Kings 123 (OT)

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Steve Nash hit a game-tying three-pointer with 2.5 seconds left in regulation, then scored 12 points in overtime to help Dallas avoid being swept in the season series.

Panthers 4, Penguins 2

PITTSBURGH — Niklas Hagman scored twice and Olli Jokinen had one goal and set up two others Sunday, leading Florida to a 4-2 victory over Pittsburgh.

Denis Shvidki added a goal for the Panthers, who had more than two goals for the first time in 12 games.

The Penguins have been held to two or fewer goals in a franchise-record 10 consecutive games. They are winless in 12 games, matching the second-longest streak in team history.

Rico Fata and Dick Tarnstrom scored for the Penguins, whose eight-game home winless streak is the second-longest in its history.

Capitals 2, Avalanche 1

WASHINGTON — Sergei Berezin had a goal and an assist in the first period, leading Washington over Colorado.

Sergei Gonchar scored the other goal for Washington, which moved within a point of Tampa Bay in the Southeast Division. The Capitals surrendered the di-

NBA

Nash finished with 27 points and 10 assists as the Mavericks got their league-high 50th victory of the season — and one of the most important victories of their impressive campaign.

Dirk Nowitzki had 34 points and 18 rebounds, and Michael Finley scored 21 points as the Mavericks displayed all of the poise and execution many doubted they could produce against the veteran Kings.

Peja Stojakovic scored 30 points for the Kings, and Chris Webber had 24 points — just seven after halftime — along with 15 rebounds and nine assists.

Grizzlies 124, Hawks 92

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Pau Gasol and Shane Battier scored 22 points each as the Grizzlies set franchise records with their sixth straight victory and their 24th victory of the season.

Battier's 22 points were a season high, while Stromile Swift had his sixth straight double-double with 12 points and 16 rebounds.

Lorenzo Wright, who returned after missing seven games because of the death of his infant daughter, had 21 points. Wesley Person added 14 and Jason Williams had 11 points and nine assists.

Memphis controlled the game from the beginning and broke for intermission with a 29-point advantage, 70-41 — the largest halftime lead in team history. The lead grew as high as 34 in the final period.

Knicks 120, Bucks 111

NEW YORK — Allan Houston scored 50 points, reaching that number with the crowd on its feet in the closing seconds, as the New York Knicks handed Milwaukee their fourth straight loss.

Houston's fourth career game with at least 40 points snapped New York's two-game losing streak and moved the Knicks a game closer to one of the teams they are chasing for the eighth playoff spot in the East.

Houston, scoring against everyone Milwaukee tried to guard him with, had 10 straight as the Knicks pulled away — including New York's first seven points of the fourth quarter. Houston reached 50 for the second time this season; he had 53 last month against the Lakers.

Desmond Mason and Gary Payton each had 23 points and Tim Thomas added 22 for the Bucks, who dropped a half-game behind the Washington Wizards in the conference standings.

Spurs 108, Bulls 97

SAN ANTONIO — Tony Parker scored 25 points, Tim Duncan added 22 and San Antonio won its sixth in a row.

Jamal Crawford scored 13 points, including 3-for-3 on three-pointers, in the

third period as the Bulls trimmed San Antonio's 12-point halftime lead to 76-73 with a quarter to play.

Steve Kerr connected on three-pointers on consecutive possessions early in the fourth, and Steve Smith followed with another three-pointer to build San Antonio's lead to 89-80 with nine minutes left. A three-point play by Duncan made it a 13-point margin with 7:31 left.

Malik Rose scored 19 and Stephen Jackson 15 for the Spurs.

Duncan led all rebounders with 12. The Spurs set a season high with 17 steals.

Rockets 85, Suns 75

HOUSTON — Yao Ming scored 20 points as Houston took the season series 3-1 and earned the tiebreaker between the two teams jockeying for eighth place in the West.

The Rockets improved their longest winning streak since the 1999-2000 season to five games. The Suns have lost three of four.

Houston rode a near-perfect second quarter to a 55-27 halftime lead, then held off a rally. Led by their guard tandem of Stephon Marbury and Anfernee Hardaway, the Suns closed the third quarter with an 18-3 run to whittle Houston's lead to nine.

Hardaway cut the Rockets' lead to 70-64 before Yao took control, scoring three of Houston's next four baskets.

SuperSonics 92, Nuggets 84

DENVER — Rashard Lewis scored 24 points and Ray Allen 20, and Seattle used an 8-0 run in the fourth quarter to hold off the Nuggets. Juwan Howard had 22 points and eight rebounds for Denver.

Seattle, which led by 13 points early in the third quarter, saw its lead whittled to one midway through the final period as Juwan Howard's 16-foot jumper, which beat the shot clock, cut the deficit to 76-75 with 6:37 left.

Brent Barry's three-pointer then ignited the eight-point flurry.

Barry finished with 14 points and nine assists, and Vladimir Radmanovic came off the bench to score 12 — all in the first half.

Clippers 111, Raptors 110

LOS ANGELES — Lamar Odom scored 26 points, including a 17-footer with 2.3 seconds remaining.

Eric Piatkowski had 15 points off the bench, including a couple of clutch three-pointers down the stretch, improving the Clippers' record to 2-6 since Dennis Johnson replaced Alvin Gentry as head coach on March 3.

Vince Carter scored 28 for the Raptors but missed a 20-footer just before the final buzzer. Antonio Davis had 22 and Morris Peterson added 20.

From The Associated Press

the NHL. The Senators lost their second straight game.

Curtis Joseph stopped 41 shots for the Red Wings, who only had 20 shots on goal.

But Hull, who also had an assist, put in three, and Henrik Zetterberg and Brendan Shanahan each had a goal and an assist.

Nicklas Lidstrom got the other goal. Marian Hossa and Mike Fisher scored for Ottawa.

Flames 2, Mighty Ducks 2

ANAHEIM, Calif. — Petr Sykora scored twice late in the third period, including the tying goal with 31 seconds remaining for Anaheim.

Calgary scored twice on power plays in the second period and appeared headed for the victory until Sykora's late goals. Sykora beat Jamie McLennan with 4:05 remaining, then tied it with goalie Jean-Sebastien Giguere pulled for an extra attacker.

Earlier, McLennan made a glove save to stop Paul Kariya on a penalty shot.

From The Associated Press

Scores/standings

NBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
New Jersey	40	26	.606	—
Philadelphia	39	26	.600	1/2
Boston	38	28	.576	2
Orlando	34	33	.507	6 1/2
Washington	32	34	.485	8
New York	29	37	.439	11
Miami	21	45	.318	19

Central Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Detroit	41	24	.631	—
Indiana	39	27	.591	2 1/2
New Orleans	38	30	.559	4 1/2
Milwaukee	32	35	.478	10
Atlanta	27	40	.403	15
Chicago	23	45	.338	19 1/2
Toronto	20	44	.313	20 1/2
Cleveland	12	53	.185	29

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Midwest Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Dallas	50	16	.758	—
San Antonio	47	18	.723	2 1/2
Minnesota	43	26	.623	8 1/2
Utah	37	29	.561	13
Houston	35	30	.538	14 1/2
Memphis	24	41	.369	25 1/2
Denver	14	52	.212	36

Pacific Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Sacramento	46	21	.687	—
Portland	42	24	.636	3 1/2
L.A. Lakers	37	28	.569	8
Phoenix	34	31	.523	11
Golden State	32	34	.485	13 1/2
Seattle	30	35	.462	15
L.A. Clippers	21	45	.318	24 1/2

Sunday's games

Cleveland 122, Utah 95
Philadelphia 92, New Jersey 87
Dallas 129, Sacramento 123, OT
Minnesota 111, Portland 95
Memphis 124, Atlanta 92
San Antonio 108, Chicago 97
New York 120, Milwaukee 111
Houston 85, Phoenix 75
Seattle 92, Denver 84
L.A. Clippers 111, Toronto 110

NHL

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
x-New Jersey	40	19	6	5	91	186
x-Philadelphia	37	18	11	4	89	168
N.Y. Islanders	32	28	9	2	75	194
N.Y. Rangers	28	33	9	3	68	190
Pittsburgh	25	38	5	5	60	213

Northeast Division

	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
x-Ottawa	45	20	7	1	98	231
Toronto	39	26	5	2	85	207
Boston	33	27	8	4	78	219
Montreal	27	30	8	8	70	183
Buffalo	21	34	9	7	58	159

Southeast Division

	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
Tampa Bay	33	23	11	5	82	196
Washington	34	26	8	5	81	198
Florida	23	29	12	9	67	164
Carolina	22	35	10	6	60	154
Atlanta	24	36	6	4	58	188

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Central Division

	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
x-Detroit	42	18	9	3	96	234
St. Louis	37	19	9	6	89	223
Nashville	27	28	11	5	70	169
Chicago	26	30	10	5	67	174
Columbus	25	36	7	3	60	186

Northwest Division

	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
x-Vancouver	40	19	12	1	93	226
Colorado	35	18	12	7	89	212
Minnesota	36	25	9	1	82	173
Edmonton	31	25	8	8	78	195
Calgary	24	33	11	4	63	164

Pacific Division

	W	L	OT	Pts	GF	GA
x-Dallas	39	16	15	2	95	217
Anaheim	35	26	9	4	83	180
Phoenix	28	30	9	4	69	183
Los Angeles	30	33	5	4	69	182
San Jose	26	33	6	6	64	191

Two points for a win, one point for a tie and overtime loss.
x-clinched playoff spot

Sunday's games

Florida 4, Pittsburgh 2
Washington 2, Colorado 1
Detroit 6, Ottawa 2
Calgary 2, Anaheim 2, tie

From The Associated Press